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**MAYOR EMANUEL CELEBRATES THE COMPLETION OF THE ALBANY PARK  
STORMWATER DIVERSION TUNNEL**

*The nearly completed tunnel had already kicked into operation four times this spring,  
helping prevent neighborhood flooding*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined Alderman Margaret Laurino, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and various local and state officials today to celebrate the completion of the Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel – a project undertaken to alleviate the threat of catastrophic flooding in the area.

"Residents should not have to live with the looming fear of a life-disrupting flood and this tunnel protects them against that threat," said Mayor Emanuel "Making these types of investments in our infrastructure are critical to the future of Chicago. It represents an ongoing commitment to improving our neighborhoods and enhancing the quality of life for our residents."

"It seems that 100 year floods are now happening every few years – something with which the residents of Albany Park and North Park are all too familiar. This project is the product of federal, state, and local groups working together, and I look forward to the protection its completion will now provide the neighborhood," said Durbin.

The Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel is designed to transfer overflow water from the North Branch of the Chicago River through a tunnel dug under Foster Ave. In essence, the tunnel serves as a second river making sure that the above ground channel doesn't overflow and flood neighborhoods like Albany Park. The inlet from the River is at a bend in the river in Eugene Field Park just east of Pulaski Road. The water flows east and exits a mile away at River Park just south of Foster Avenue into the North Shore Channel.

"The people of this community are looking forward to rain storms without their homes and lives being devastated. The quality of life improvement this project provides for these residents cannot be overstated," said Alderman Laurino.

In the spring, the nearly completed tunnel had already kicked into operation four times, preventing neighborhood floods. The tunnel first activated on May 3, when the water level reached the intake channel. It diverted a flow of over 1,000 cubic feet of water per second, bypassing Albany Park and emptying into the North Shore Channel at the outlet shaft at River Park just south of Foster Avenue.

“Watching the tunnel actually divert potential flood waters earlier this year was a relief,” CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. “Knowing that this community is safe from devastating floods makes this one of our most gratifying projects.”

The Albany Park Stormwater Diversion Tunnel is a joint project by CDOT and the Metropolitan Water and Reclamation District (MWRD) made possible through federal, state, and local funds.

“The new stormwater diversion tunnel will bring much-needed relief to the residents of Albany Park and surrounding areas who have endured severe flooding in recent years caused by the Chicago River overflowing during heavy rain,” Duckworth said. “Investing in our state’s infrastructure is one of the most important things we can do to move Illinois forward and I will continue working with Senator Durbin to secure federal support for projects like this.”

“From damage to property and infrastructure to major health and safety risks, urban flooding has a devastating ability to wreak havoc in our communities,” said Rep. Quigley. “The completion of the Albany Park storm water diversion tunnel is a major step in our ongoing efforts to keep water off our streets and out of our basements. I applaud all those involved in this project for their work to mitigate the costly and dangerous consequences of urban flooding in the Chicagoland area.”

In addition to the Stormwater Diversion Tunnel, the project will also add improvements to Eugene Field Park at the western end of the tunnel, including landscaping, new trees, a new walkway, benches and a water fountain, and improvements to River Park at the eastern end of the project, including landscaping, new trees, a new soccer field and a new regulation-sized baseball field and diamond with a backstop fence and batting cage.

Since 2008, Albany Park has experienced two major floods that have affected hundreds of homes in the northwest side community along the North Branch of the Chicago River. After the last round of serious flooding in April 2013, Mayor Emanuel pledged the city would address the problem in a comprehensive way and directed CDOT to move forward with design and engineering of a drainage tunnel. The \$70 million project was responsible for producing approximately 250 construction jobs.

Mayor Emanuel first began working on this issue when he served as U.S. Congressman, representing the Illinois's 5th congressional district that included Albany Park.

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